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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/089,359	06/10/2002	Peter John Burns	U 013949-3	7841

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EXAMINER

BROWN, MICHAEL A

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3764

DATE MAILED: 04/09/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

101 089,359

Applicant(s)

Peter Burns

Examiner

Michael Brown

Group Art Unit

3764

—The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet beneath the correspondence address—

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, such period shall, by default, expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Status

- ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____
- ☐ This action is **FINAL**.
- ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 and 9-17 is/are pending in the application.
- Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 and 9-17 is/are rejected.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

- ☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.
- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d)

- ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- ☒ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been received.
- ☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____
- ☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 1.7.2(a));

*Certified copies not received: _____

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). 4
- ☒ Notice of Reference(s) Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
- ☐ Other _____

Office Action Summary

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-5, 7 and 9-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fraunce.

Fraunce discloses 1-7 a method to form a mouthguard comprising providing a mold having a portion configured as a reproduction of a portion of a user's mouth (col. 8, lines 9-10), locating on the mold a mouthguard shell (col. 8, line 9, mouthguard blank), placing over the shell a deformable sheet 136 and applying pressure across the sheet (col. 8, lines 15-20). The sheet has a remote side and a shell side (the remote is the top side of the sheet and the shell side is the bottom side of the sheet). The pressure on the remote side is increased to urge the shell (the mouthguard blank) against the mold (the vacuum pressure pushes the sheet against the mouthguard blank). Since the pressure is reduced on the remote side in order for the sheet to come into contact with the mold the pressure on the sheet side has to be reduced. The sheet is made of silicone (col. 3, lines 50-52).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 6 and 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Faunce in view of Faunce.

Faunce discloses in figures 1-7 a method of forming a mouthguard substantially as claimed. Faunce also teaches that a sheet could be substituted for the flexible membrane (col. 7, lines 64-68). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time that the invention was made that the sheet (a sheet is flat) as taught by Faunce could be substituted for the membrane disclosed by Faunce because either could be used to hold the mouthguard blank onto the mold to form a mouthguard. One of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that a membrane could be flat or dome shaped.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Ueno discloses a method of making a mouthguard. Karg discloses a diaphragm. Although each of these references discloses structural limitations recited in the claims, neither could be used to reject any claims, in the first office action.

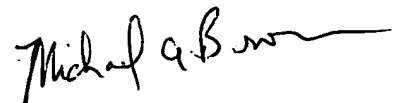
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Brown whose telephone number is 703-308-2682. The examiner can normally be reached on 5:30 am-4:00 pm Monday-Friday.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nicholas Lucchesi can be reached on 703-308-2698. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

M. Brown
March 25, 2004



MICHAEL A. BROWN
PRIMARY EXAMINER